

LANCASTER Keeping Current

AN ELECTRONIC PUBLICATION OF THE HOURGLASS FOUNDATION

Lancaster County Smart Growth Issues

March 23, 2004

FYI

A FOCUS ON PROPERTY TAX RELIEF – In the March 17th IssuesPA E-alert, an electronic publication of the [Pennsylvania Economy League](#), IssuesPA takes a look at the issue of [property tax relief](#) in Pennsylvania. It's easy to get caught up in the rhetoric -- \$1 billion from slots and tax reductions for everyone (every homeowner, anyway)! But how would all that money be distributed? What would be the impact on Pennsylvania's school finance system? Who would be the real winners and losers in this equation? IssuesPA took a look at the tough questions state lawmakers should be asking and the details that make property tax relief so complicated.

THE STATE OF THE COMMONWEALTH: IS PENNSYLVANIA MOVING TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE? – A new [report](#) has just been issued by the [Pennsylvania Consortium for Interdisciplinary Environmental Policy](#). This report attempts to measure the Commonwealth's progress toward achieving sustainability. The term is defined here as: *a way of making decisions that takes into account the environment's ability to support economic activity and ensure a high quality of life for future generations*. This report makes a valuable contribution to the discussion around the Governor's Quality of Life budget proposal. It establishes clear links between the environment, the economy and social well-being – concepts that underlie the approach of making polluters pay and using the money to pay for conservation and restoration work. The report also contains some interesting and disturbing information; it is yet another voice in the chorus identifying sprawl as a huge threat to the environment, the economy and our social fabric.

Most of the human activity and decisions that directly impact sustainability occur at local levels. Unfortunately, many (if not most) local governments lack the capacity and resources (time, money, trained personnel) to engage in effective sustainability planning. A key challenge facing state government agencies, as well as many non-governmental organizations, is to find ways to assist local governments.

The State of the Commonwealth

TOWNSHIP ASSOCIATION CALLS FOR LAND USE PLANNING TO REMAIN IN THE HANDS OF RESIDENTS AND THEIR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS – The Executive Board of the [Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors](#) has urged the governor and the state legislature to proceed judiciously in considering any policies or legislation that would pre-empt local control of land use decisions from the more than 5.1 million Pennsylvanians who call townships home. [Read the press release](#).

REGULATORY BARRIERS CLEARINGHOUSE - a new online resource developed by HUD's Office of Policy Development & Research (PD&R), supports state & local governments and others seeking information about laws, regulations, and policies affecting affordable housing. For more information, visit the [Regulatory Barriers Clearinghouse website](#) or call toll-free 1-800-245-2691, option 4.

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, April 6, 2004
4:00-6:00 p.m. - Regional Transportation Summit
Transportation challenges don't know County borders – many are regional in nature. That's why The Lancaster Chamber and Harrisburg Regional Chamber are teaming up for this summit at the Whitaker Center for the Arts. To register, email <mailto:cpattison@hbrc.org>

Thursday, April 8, 2004
12:30-1:30 p.m. – How to Transform A City- Envision Lancaster County Brown Bag Lunch to hear a Smart City rebroadcast discussion with guests John Norquist, 4-term Mayor of Milwaukee and David Beach, Exec. Director of EcoCity Cleveland. Seating is limited. For reservations email Gael Rapp rappg@co.lancaster.pa.us

Thursday, April 29, 2004
8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. – Regional Economics: Planning for Community and Economic Development – This course will provide the participant with an understanding of the increasingly important relationship between regional economic development and local community revitalization. It will also explore why, in the age of the knowledge-based economy, both community and economic development must be addressed for a town or a region to be competitive. *Sponsored by the Lancaster County Planning Commission and the Workforce Investment Board of Lancaster County*. Four Seasons Golf Course. For more information contact Toby Vargas, Lancaster County Planning Commission (717) 299-8333.

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